

"Don't you call what he has been writing, doing anything?"

"Well, it isn't steady. It's too much in the air."

"Yes," thought Marjorie with something tugging very hard at her heart. "It is too much in the air, too high, too fine for you ever to see." But she said no more. She feared she might betray herself. She would have given all, everything, for the love this girl valued so little.

Marjorie was an orphan and might have been on the charity of relatives but for the \$10 a week she earned as a stenographer in the big city. When her only brother, all she had in the world, died from injuries in a football "rush," she had first met Jerry Wade. He was her brother's college chum and he tried to comfort the forlorn little sister. It was something besides comfort that came to Marjorie, but he went back to college and she did not let him know. Through the dishonesty of a relative she lost what little money had been left her, and Wade, about the same time, by his father's failure, found himself thrown on his own resources. He had always hoped to write something worth while. It had been for many years his dream, and he meant to realize it. But Helen gave him to understand he must "do something." In fact, she put him on probation.

Wade called occasionally on Marjorie and talked most of the time about Helen. For the sake of seeing him for a little while she could bear to hear the praises of this other girl, who she was sure did not understand or care for him as she did. Sometimes he brought his last story to read to her. She was so appreciative, and he began more and more to value her criticisms. Several times he made changes she suggested. Marjorie had been a real student and was a constant reader of the best authors. She was beginning to put her knowledge to some use in thinking and judging values.

One evening, in speaking of Helen,

Wade rather jokingly said she had put him on his mettle, she was making him wait.

"I wonder," he said suddenly, "if she thinks I will ever win out."

"If she really loved you she would know you would win."

The pent-up dam had burst its bounds. She could stand the repression of herself no longer. She went on with a vehemence of which he had never believed her capable.

"I tell you the woman who understands a man as she ought to if she really loves him will know what he can do. She will be sure he will do it!"

He looked at her wonderingly.

"What an inspiration you would be to a man," he said. "I think you would make him do it."

He went away without another word. She would not have thought it strange if he had not come again. A man in love does not care to hear criticisms of his fiancée. But he did come, and she carefully refrained from any further outbursts. Almost always he brought new stories to read to her, and things went on much as they had done before. One evening he told her some great, good news. Two stories had been accepted. One of the editors had sent for him. He had been asked for more and he was going to put up his price. Marjorie rejoiced with him and they went out and had a little supper. The next news he brought was that he had been offered a reader's position at one of the publishing houses. Marjorie advised him not to take it, as it would take all his time from his story writing.

"But Helen has advised me to take it," he answered.

She said nothing, but looked unutterable things.

She did not see him again for two weeks. He seemed to have a good deal on his mind. Then he told her he had released Helen from the engagement.